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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/14/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UNGA](#) [PTER](#) [EG](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN-IRAQI RELATIONS UPDATE; IRAQ'S NEIGHBORS  
SET TO CONVENE IN NEW YORK AND JEDDAH

REF: CAIRO 5708 (NOTAL)

Classified by Minister Counselor for Economic and Political  
Affairs William R. Stewart for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Egyptian MFA Spokesman Alaa Hadidi updated poloff on September 14 regarding Egypt's bilateral relations with Iraq, and on upcoming regional events involving Iraq. Hadidi confirmed reftel report that Egypt invited Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki to visit, but said he was unaware of specific plans or dates for that event. Hadidi said the GOE had hoped Maliki would visit Cairo prior to his recent Tehran trip. Speculating on possible motives why Maliki did not come, Hadidi suggested Maliki might have wanted to delay a Cairo visit until after a mid-September Egyptian ruling party conference, given persistent rumors of a coming cabinet shake-up.

¶2. (C) Asked about the status of Egypt's bilateral relations with Iraq, Hadidi asserted there was "nothing new," despite the Iraqi foreign minister's recent statement to an Egyptian newspaper that Iraq would post an ambassador to Cairo by the end of the year. Hadidi said the Iraqis had not made a formal request to post an Ambassador, nor had the issue been raised by FM Zebari when he was in Cairo last week for an Arab League ministerial. In general, Hadidi stated, Egypt would continue its political support for the Government of Iraq in its efforts to establish stability and security.

¶3. (C) Discussing upcoming regional events involving Iraq, Hadidi confirmed Egypt would participate in a meeting of interior ministers of Iraq's neighbors scheduled for next week in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The ministers, he added, would review a draft protocol on border security, and would discuss establishing a secretariat or other mechanism for sharing information. Similarly, foreign ministers of Iraq's neighbors and Egypt would meet on September 18 in New York on the margins of the UNGA. Hadidi said Egypt had also been asked to participate in an Iraq Compact meeting in New York, even though it had been left off the list for the recent meeting in the Emirates. Asked whether the Arab League's reconciliation efforts would be on the agenda of the New York meeting, Hadidi lamented that the League's efforts had been "frozen" by the Iraqi government's decision not to pursue the effort.

JONES